

**REMARKS**

The present amendment is submitted in response to the Office Action dated July 2, 2002, which set a three-month period for response, making this amendment due by October 2, 2002.

Claims 1 through 5 are pending in this application.

In the Office Action, claims 1-5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 1-5 were rejected further under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,041,944 to Meier. Claims 1-5 also stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by WO 97/04850.

Turning first to the rejection of the claims as indefinite, the Applicants have amended claims 1-5 to change the objected-to language, for example, by replacing "characterized in that" with the term "wherein".

Regarding the substantive rejection of the claims under Section 102, the Applicants respectfully disagree that the cited references anticipated the present invention as claimed. (The Applicants also wish to point out that the subject matter of the cited U.S. patent to Meier is identical to the WO '850 patent).

The present invention differs from the subject matter of the cited references in a number of ways. Specifically, the filter element, as defined in the present application, builds a single cavity, a hollow chamber around the central tube, as seen from Fig. 1 of the present application. In addition, the inventive filter element is built of two tubes, the central tube and the sheath element.

Therefore, it is very easy to produce and to clean. In contrast, the filter element of the cited reference has at least more than seven tubes.

In the present invention, no element is spirally wound, which is rather complicated to produce. Also, in the device as claimed in the present application, the central tube is removably arranged inside the metallic sheath element. In contrast, the central element of the cited art is an integral part of the multi-tube filter element.

Also, the sheet steel of the sheath element of the present invention is very thin and much less heavy than the arrangements disclosed in the cited art.


In sum, the present invention solves the problem of devising a filter element that is simple to produce, that is stable, and that ensures efficient trapping of solids, while also guaranteeing perfect cleaning.

For the reasons set forth above, therefore, the Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-5 are patentable over the cited art. The Applicant therefore respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102 and reconsideration of the claims as herein amended.

In light of the foregoing arguments in support of patentability, the Applicants respectfully submit that this application stands in condition for allowance. Action to this end is courteously solicited.

Should the Examiner have any further comments or suggestions, the undersigned would very much welcome a telephone call in order to discuss appropriate claim language that will place the application into condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,



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